UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/54/759
S/2000/135
18 February 2000

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 43
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fifth year

LETTER DATED 18 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to enclose herewith an urgent letter addressed to you by Salim El Hoss, Prime Minister of Lebanon, concerning the recent acts of aggression perpetrated by Israel against Lebanon.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Selim TADMOURY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 18 February 2000 from the Prime Minister of Lebanon to the Secretary-General

While international efforts are being made to secure the resumption of the meetings of the April Understanding Monitoring Group, Israel has decided upon a fresh and grave escalation of the situation, with the announcement that a ministerial troika, headed by Prime Minister Barak, has been given the authority to decide upon strikes against Lebanese civilians and Lebanon's infrastructure.

This announcement comes at a time when irresponsible threats have been issued by officials in Israel. Foreign Minister Levy has threatened that the soil of Lebanon will burn and that the Lebanese Government will pay a heavy price, while army Chief of Staff Mufaz has spoken about striking at civilian villages, if the resistance continues its legitimate struggle against the forces of occupation.

Israel's latest acts of aggression and threats reveal the truly uncivilized nature of its policy, which is based upon occupation and inflicting collective suffering upon civilians. They also represent a desperate attempt to cover up Israel's continuing occupation of Lebanese territory.

It is regrettable that Israel, as a Member of the United Nations, by whose Charter and precepts it is bound, and a country which claims that it would like the peace talks to resume, has resorted to authorizing the deliberate murder of innocent people, in contravention of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the most basic humanitarian and moral principles.

You should have no doubt that Israel's latest threats foretoken fresh acts of aggression to be carried out against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders of Lebanon. Such acts flout the terms of the April Understanding, demonstrate disregard for its provisions and for efforts to reconvene the Group's meetings and are in flagrant contravention of the imperatives of peace in the region

Lebanon, in reiterating its commitment to the peace process and to finding a just and comprehensive solution, once more affirms its right, in keeping with the precepts of the United Nations and the terms of the April Understanding, to resist occupation. It calls upon the international community to take all appropriate measures to prevent renewed acts of aggression by Israel against Lebanon and the security of its people and territory, and to guarantee, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from Lebanese territory to the internationally recognized borders.

In view of the grave situation that has been created by Israeli acts of aggression and threats, we call upon you to make every effort and to use your good offices to ensure that Israel desists from pursuing its hostile plans against Lebanon. We request that you draw the attention of the Security Council to the critical situation created by these acts and that you have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.